

claims 1-6, 9 and 14 have been amended, claims 39-43 have been added, and additional changes have also been made to the specification and the drawings. In view of the amendments to the specification, the claims and the drawings, and further in view of the following remarks, reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

DISCUSSION OF AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

On page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to several informalities contained within the disclosure. Specifically, the Examiner noted that on page 5, line 27 of the specification "attaching two guides" is recited while line 30 also recites "attaching two guides." The Examiner desired a clarification on the different guides. Since the two guides recited on line 30 are actually two other guides, making a total of four guides attached to the deck, page 5, line 30 has been amended to include the word "other" between the word "two" and the word "guides" to more clearly bring out this distinction. Furthermore, the word "other" has been added to line 31 also on page 5. Particular support for this addition can be found on page 10, lines 18-37 and in Figure 5.

On page 8, line 25, the description of Figure 6 has been amended to more clearly point out a particular detail of Figure 5 illustrated within Figure 6 in order to address the objection raised by the Examiner in the first part of the Office Action at the top of page 3.

On page 11, line 20, reference character 22 was changed to reference character 20 in order to correct a typographical error.

DISCUSSION ON CLAIMS

Initially, the Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 6-8 and 10-13 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as set forth in the Office Action and to include all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims from which they depend. Towards that end, a new claim 39 was added to include the limitations of claims 1, 2, 5 and 6. New claims 40 and 41 have also been added to include the limitations of dependent claims 7 and 8. Additionally, new claim 42 was added to include the limitations of claim 1, 2, 5, 9 and 10 and a new claim 43 has been added to include the limitations of dependent claim 11. Based on the indication of allowable subject matter, claims 39-43 should be in clear condition for allowance.

In presenting these new claim sets, careful attention has been paid to the formal rejections presented by the Examiner in the Office Action. More specifically, claims 2, 5, 6 and 9 have been amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter regarded as the invention based on the points raised by the Examiner. In drafting these new independent claim sets, careful attention has been paid to provide proper antecedent basis and for clarity of the claim subject matter. Furthermore, other changes have been made to claims 2-4 and 14 to address other points raised by the Examiner and/or to correct other noted, potential formal problems in the claims. In general, all the claims have been amended to be in good form for allowance in accordance with U.S. practice.

On page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 16 and 37 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Dysarz U.S. Patent No. 4,388,024. Initially, the Applicant submits that claim 37 has been canceled thereby obviating all the rejections with respect to that claim. Regarding the rejection of claim 1, this claim has been amended to more clearly describe the deck as having two substantially parallel side edges, support for which can be found on page 10, lines 4-8 of the specification. The

Applicant respectfully submits that this amendment to claim 1 overcomes the rejection under 102(b) with respect to the Dysarz reference. Specifically, Dysarz includes a triangular shaped deck having structure which is recessed to receive legs 15, 16 and 17. See Figure 2A.

Claims 1-4 and 16 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Blenkarn (U.S. Patent No. 3,392,534). Blenkarn teaches a structure supported by a plurality of legs arranged outboard of a deck 10. Each leg 12 is supported by a separate pad 20. By contrast, present claim 1 recites an offshore structure having a base, a deck and a plurality of legs extending between the base and the deck. With this arrangement, the legs are attached to a common base and used to support the deck as opposed to having independent or individual support members for each leg. The Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, even in its original form, would not be anticipated by the Blenkard reference.

Claims 1-4, and 16 have also been rejected under 102(b) as being anticipated by Estes (U.S. Patent No. 3,385,069). The Estes reference discloses a structure wherein legs 3 are held within the overall structure in the deck and are not located outboard of parallel side edges as required by amended claim 1. Therefore, it is submitted that Estes does not disclose nor suggest the limitations recited by claim 1 as amended.

In paragraph 9 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 5, 9, 14 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dysarz in view of the Structural Steel Design Publication (pages 207, 237). As stated above, Dysarz discloses a structure having a triangular shaped deck including recesses to receive a plurality of support legs. In contrast, the offshore structure of the present invention, as covered by claim 1, includes legs that are attached to a base located outboard of substantially parallel side edges of a deck. The combination of these features allows the structure of the present invention to be assembled by floating the deck between the legs and forming only a loose connection between the deck and the legs to enable the deck to be raised to its final

position by jacking means. In contrast, Dysarz, with its triangular configuration, would not provide the geometry necessary to float the deck between the legs. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully submits that Dysarz, itself, does not disclose the invention as claimed.

With respect to the teaching in the Structural Steel Design Publication, the Applicant agrees that it is well known in the art that numerous modes of failure, due to shear, bending or axial stresses, can occur when connecting two structures. However, the Applicant disagrees that it would be obvious to modify Dysarz to include a sheer plate arrangement including top and bottom coupling plates to prevent the structure from failing at a connection point between the legs and the deck. The Applicant respectfully submits that, while the Structural Steel Design Publication teaches problems associated with shear, bending and axial forces, the Examiner has not provided a reference that teaches the specific sheer plate and coupling arrangement described and claimed in the present application.

DISCUSSION ON THE DRAWINGS

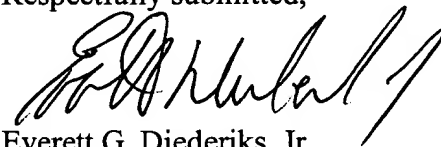
Figures 6 and 13 has been amended to address the objections raised by the Examiner in the Office Action on the top of page 3. If the changes to the Figures are acceptable to the Examiner, the Applicant will submit Formal Drawings incorporating these changes prior to payment of any issue fee.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, and the amendments made to the specification claims and drawings, all of which changes have been made without introducing any new matter in the application, it is respectfully submitted that the application should now be in

clear condition for allowance such that allowance of all the claims and passage of the application issue is respectfully requested. If the Examiner should have any additional concerns regarding the allowance of this application, he is cordially invited to contact the undersigned at the number provided below if it would further expedite the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,



Everett G. Diederiks, Jr.
Attorney for Applicant
Registration No. 33,323

Date: June 19, 2003
DIEDERIKS & WHITELAW, PLC
12471 Dillingham Square, #301
Woodbridge, VA 22192
Tel: (703) 583-8300
Fax: (703) 583-8301



1. (Once Amended) An offshore structure comprising a base, a deck having two substantially parallel side edges, and a plurality of [lattice] legs extending between the base and the deck, wherein the legs are attached to the base [arranged] outboard of [the deck] said side edges and a connection is provided between an inwardly facing face of each leg and the deck.
2. (Once Amended) An offshore structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein each said [lattice] leg comprises a vertically extending chord at each corner thereof.
3. (Once Amended) An offshore structure as claimed in claim 2, wherein each said [leg] chord is circular in cross section.
4. (Twice Amended) An offshore structure as claimed in claim 1, wherein each said [lattice] leg is triangular.
5. (Twice Amended) An offshore structure as claimed in claim 2, wherein the connection between each said leg and the deck comprises a shear plate, having a top and a bottom, attached substantially vertically between the deck and a respective said [leg] chord.
6. (Once Amended) An offshore structure as claimed in claim 5, wherein the connection further comprises a stiffening plate extending through a diameter of the [leg] chord, wherein a first side edge of said shear plate is welded to said stiffening plate and said shear plate and said stiffening plate are substantially aligned.
9. (Twice Amended) An offshore structure as claimed in claim 5, wherein the connection further comprises a [further] metal coupling plate, having inboard and outboard ends, attached horizontally between the deck and the [let] chord.

RECEIVED
JUN 23 2003
GROUP 3600

14. (Twice Amended) An offshore structure as claimed in claim 9, wherein[a] the connection further comprises an additional coupling plate, said coupling plate and said additional coupling plate are [is] provided at the top and the bottom of the shear plate respectively.

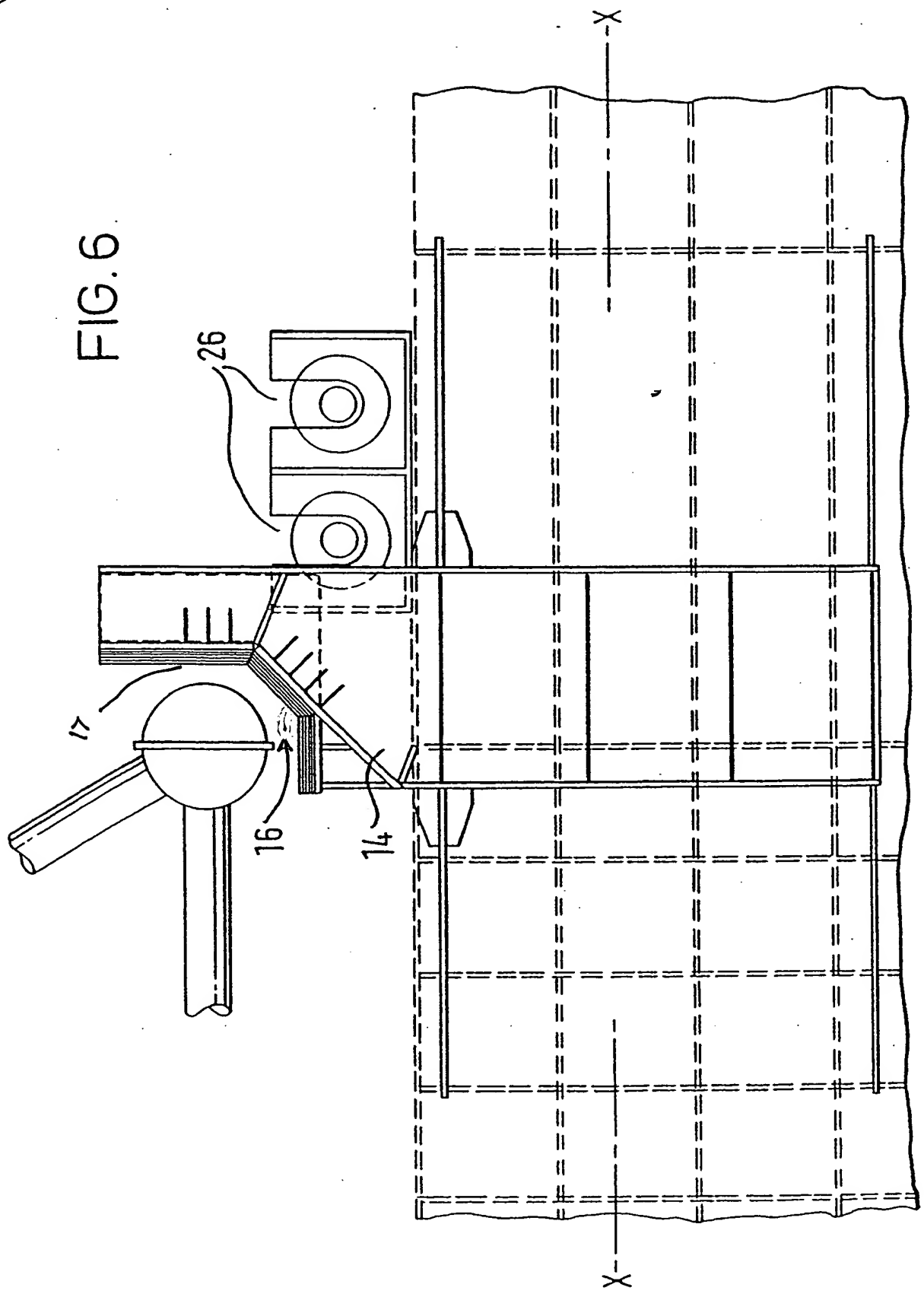


WO 00/24972

PCT/GB99/03521

8/13

FIG. 6





13/13

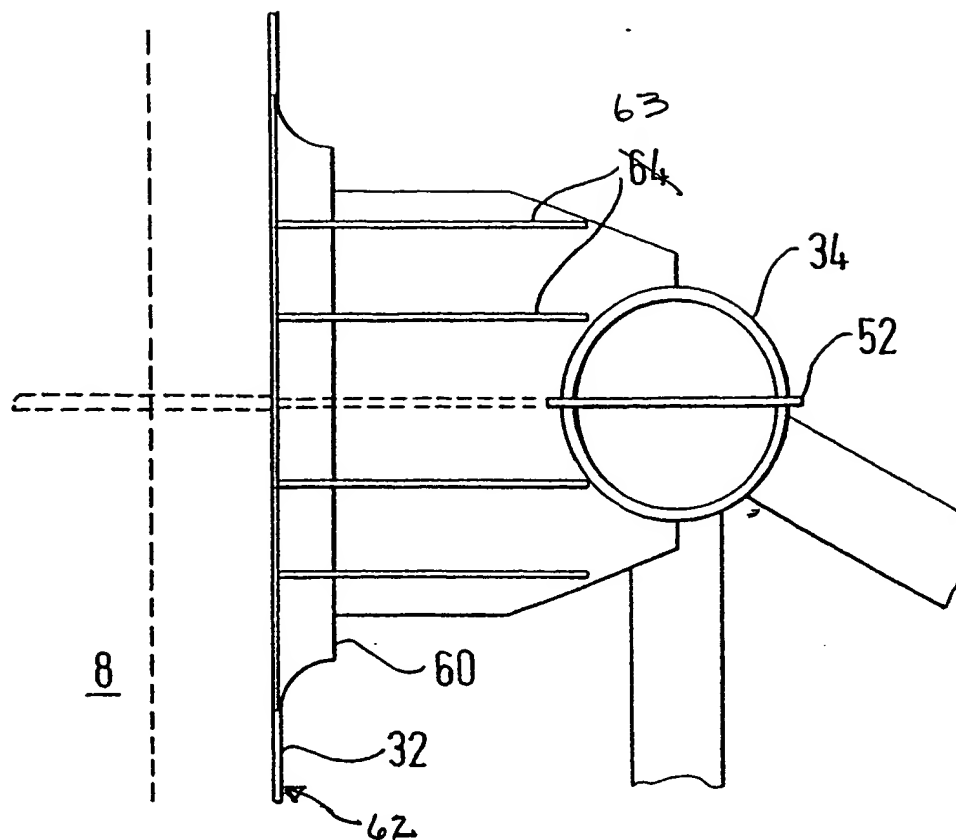


FIG. 13

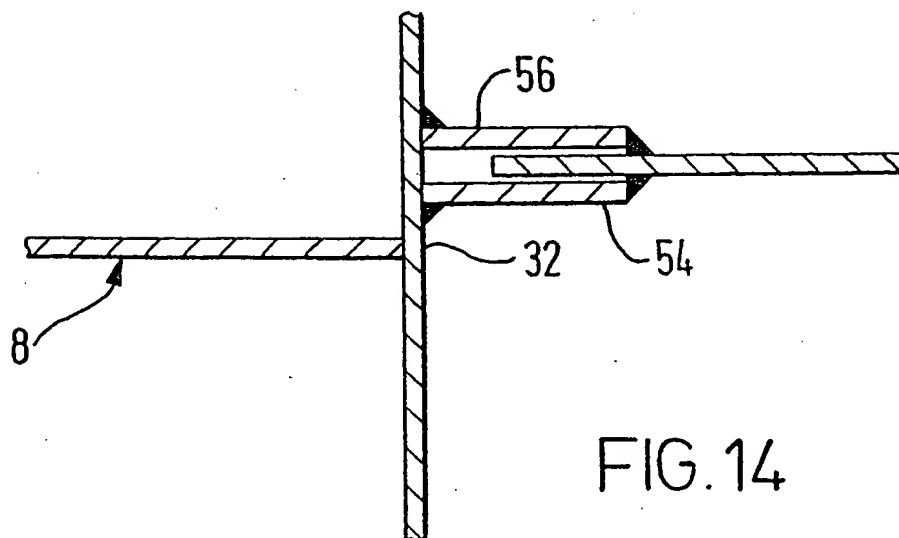


FIG. 14